

CITY OF MUSKEGON
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

May 15, 2014

Chairman T. Michalski called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: J. Doyle, T. Michalski, B. Larson, B. Smith, L. Spataro, B. Mazade, S. Gawron, S. Wisneski

MEMBERS ABSENT: F. Peterson, excused

STAFF PRESENT: M. Franzak, D. Renkenberger

OTHERS PRESENT: R. Gustafson, Hooker DeJong; J. Kell, Muskegon County; J. Koens, Muskegon County; B. Johnson, URS Consultants

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion that the minutes of the regular meeting of March 13, 2014 be approved, was made by S. Wisneski, supported by J. Doyle and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Hearing, Case 2014-06: Request for an amendment to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) to allow a new transit center at the parcels known as 331, 363 and 365 Morris Avenue, by the County of Muskegon. M. Franzak presented the staff report. The current transit center is located at 365 Morris Avenue. This plan includes an addition to the current building and utilization of the adjacent parcels at 331 and 363 Morris Avenue, as part of the new transit center. The existing building measures 1,440 square feet. The addition will add another 5,060 square feet, for a total building size of 6,500 square feet. The building will be set back about 4 feet from the front property line.

At the time of this writing, staff was informed that the building size may be decreased. The zoning ordinance states that staff may approve changes to an approved site plan up to 5% of the total building area. There may be a need to come back before the Planning Commission if the changes are significant. There will be space for 7 buses to be parked at pick-up locations on site. There will also be space for 4 buses to be parked on the street. The on-street bus stop farthest to the east could cause vision problems for cars exiting the parking lot. There are 4 proposed street lights (to match existing) to the north near the on-street bus pickup locations. There will be space for the trolley to park to the east of the parcel in the summer, with the area being used for snow storage in the winter. The plan includes 4 curb cuts; two to the north and one each to the east and west. The curb cut to the east will only be used by buses if the other bus exit is blocked. There is a proposed ornamental privacy fence just east of the proposed parking lot to screen the parking lot from the right of way. The parking lot on site includes 13 parking spaces and is connected to the roundabout that will be used to drop off passengers. The pavement striping on the southeast part of the property appears to be partially located on the city-owned alley. This area must remain unstriped. The landscaping plan is complete and goes beyond the requirements for typical downtown development. Notice was sent to property owners within 300 feet of this property. At the time of this writing, staff had not received any comments regarding the proposed plan.

M. Franzak discussed the lighting fixtures on the property. He had spoken to the City Engineer, who preferred that the lights be moved to County property rather than being located on City property. Staff and board members further discussed the streetlights and their preferred location. L. Spataro asked if the alley had been vacated. M. Franzak stated that part of it had. L. Spataro asked if any new curb cuts were proposed. M. Franzak stated that the County did not want to add more curb cuts, just relocate some of the existing ones. S. Wisneski asked where the utility boxes and connections would be located. He was concerned that the boxes could be located in front of the building. B. Johnson stated that their location needed to be coordinated with the utility provider, but they would not block pedestrian traffic. L. Spataro stated that state law determined where the utilities were located, so the Planning Commission could not overrule state requirements. J. Koens, manager of the Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS), stated that their intent was to make improvements to the facility to benefit the downtown community. L. Spataro asked what the building's presence would be on Morris Avenue. B. Johnson stated that they would like to close in the building and bring it closer to Morris Avenue, while routing bus traffic to the rear of the facility. J. Doyle asked how the restroom configuration changed in the revised plan. J. Koens stated that they had been moved, but would remain essentially the same size. They had reduced the space in the back room in the revised plan, not restroom space.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by J. Doyle, supported by B. Larson and unanimously approved.

A motion that the amendment to the Final PUD for 100 Muskegon Mall for the properties at 331, 363 and 365 Morris Avenue be approved, with the modifications presented at this meeting, and to allow the Zoning Administrator to approve changes in the site plan, was made by L. Spataro, supported by J. Doyle and unanimously approved.

Case 2014-07: Request for a site plan review for a park addition at 900 West Western Avenue, by the County of Muskegon. M. Franzak presented the staff report. The Rotary Club has made a donation to build a new park adjacent to the YMCA. The property is zoned LR, Lakefront Recreation. Muskegon County has purchased the property just to the east of the YMCA (the parcel has not been split yet) and will maintain the park. A new parking lot with 21 parking spaces will be accessible from the YMCA parking lot. Structural additions include two picnic shelters, a playground, a restroom building, and an elevated boardwalk and canoe/kayak launch. Other improvements include sidewalks, pavement areas and landscaping additions.

L. Spataro asked if the YMCA was aware of, and had approved of the proposed parking lot access through their lot. M. Franzak stated that they did not have a problem with it, as far as he knew. YMCA personnel had been working with the County on this project since the beginning. J. Kell described the project and its funding. She stated that there were agreements in place for parking and easements. The playground equipment currently at Heritage Landing would remain there, and new barrier-free equipment would be installed at the new park ("Rotary Park"). Rotary Park will become part of the County parks system. B. Mazade asked where the bike path would be routed. R. Gustafson stated that the bike path would stay where it was, and the new park would have its own paths within the park. B. Mazade stated that he was glad to see a restroom facility in the area. J. Kell stated that there would be a picnic shelter as well. B. Mazade asked if there would be a fishing pier. J. Kell stated that there would not be one at this site, but there would be a kayak/canoe launch. R. Gustafson stated that, because the park's waterfront was in a lagoon, they wanted to minimize wetland disruption as much as possible. J. Doyle asked if they had a construction start date. R. Gustafson stated that they were hoping to start around the end of June. J. Doyle asked if the DNR restricted any future changes to the park. J. Kell stated that they would work within DNR constraints. J. Doyle asked how the park would be maintained, since it had to fund itself. J. Kell stated that the Rotary Club had made a

commitment to help maintain the park, and the Friends of the Park committee would do the best they could also.

A motion that the site plan for a park addition at 900 West Western Avenue be approved as proposed, was made by B. Mazade, supported by L. Spataro and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Extending the Master Plan – M. Franzak described the Master Plan requirements, and stated that the City would like to extend the Plan as is currently exists.

A motion to extend the Master Plan as it currently exists was made by L. Spataro, supported by B. Larson and unanimously approved.

OTHER

Zoning Ordinance Update – M. Franzak updated board members on the process. He stated that the consultants were working on incorporating the public comments, and they hoped to be at the halfway point by the end of May.

J. Doyle asked about the former West Michigan Steel foundry site on Muskegon Lake. M. Franzak stated that staff was looking into options for that property, but he was not aware of any plans for it at this time.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.